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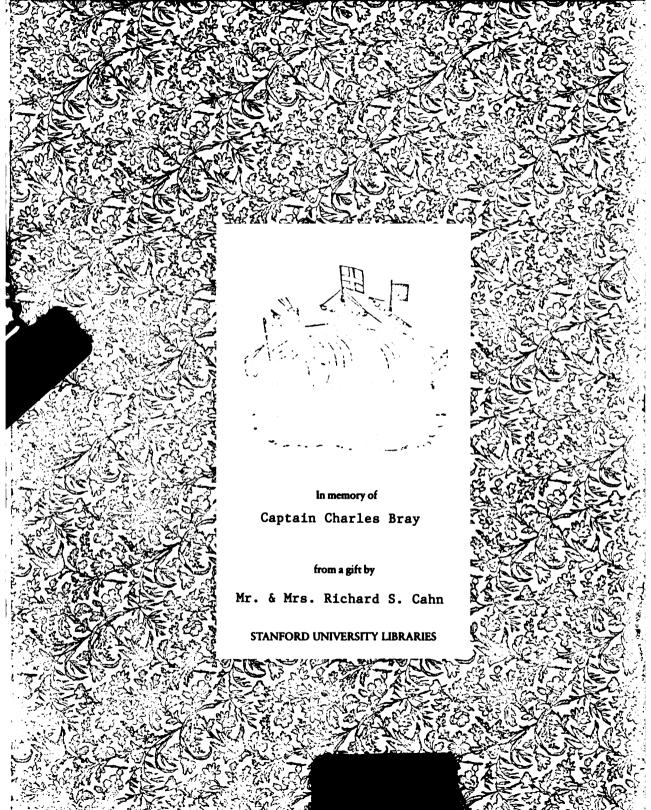


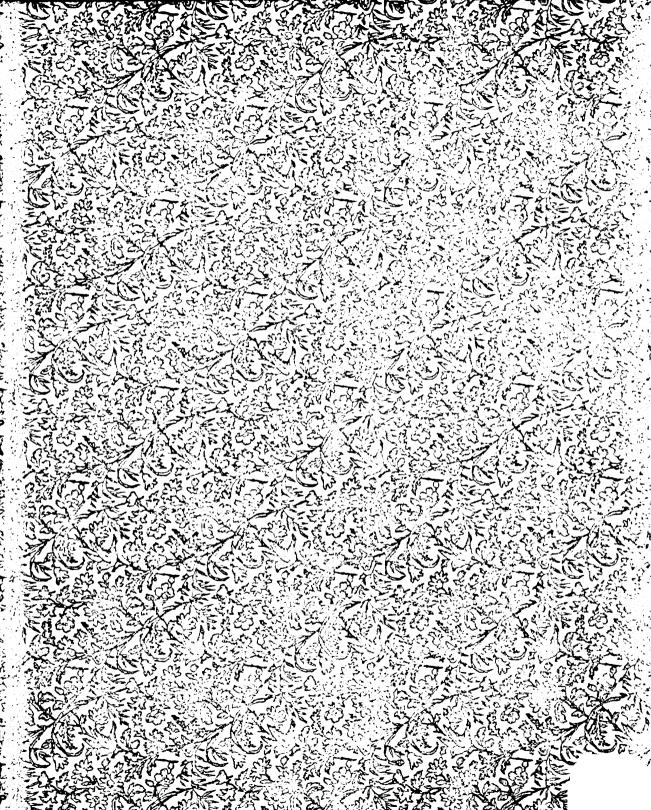
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Poems

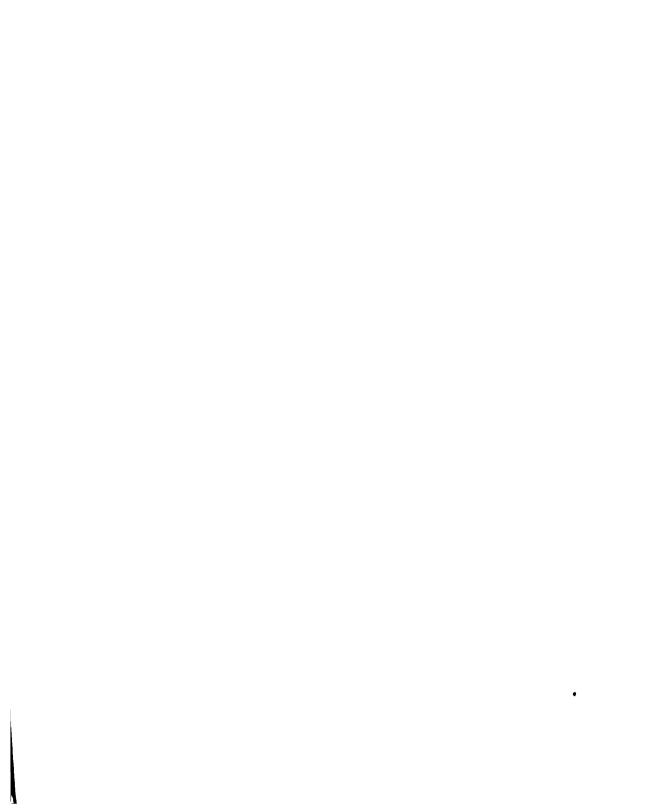
POWNOLL TOKER WILLIAMS.







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BY

POWNOLL TOKER WILLIAMS, M.A..

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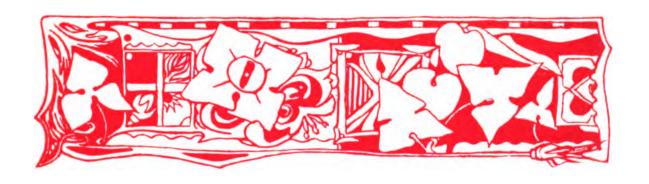
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1889.

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TO



WHO HATH INDEED BLESSED MY WEDDED LIFE,

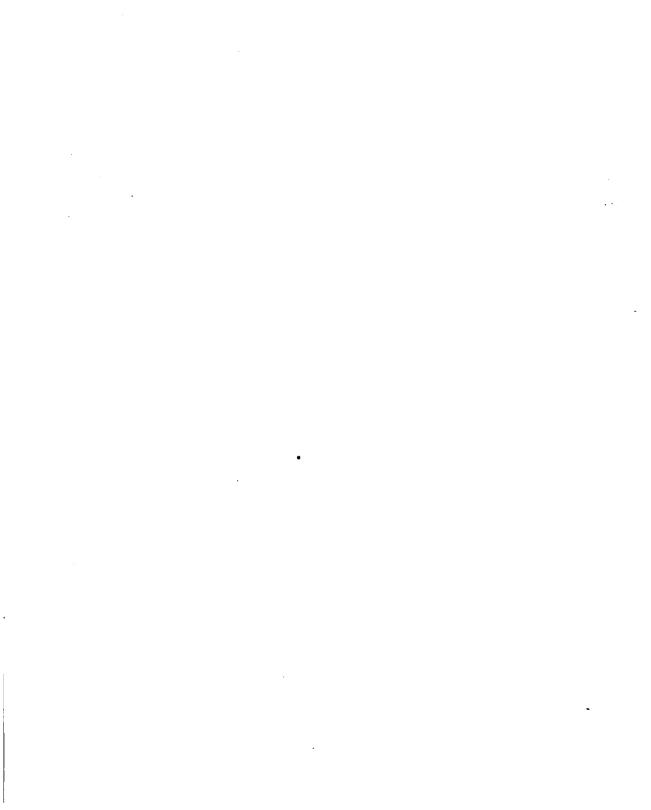
I now Bedicate

THESE MODEST VERSES,

WRITTEN IN THE LEISURE OF FORMER DAYS.

POWNOLL TOKER WILLIAMS.

January, 1889.



["'All comes to him who waits.' Dear Heart!

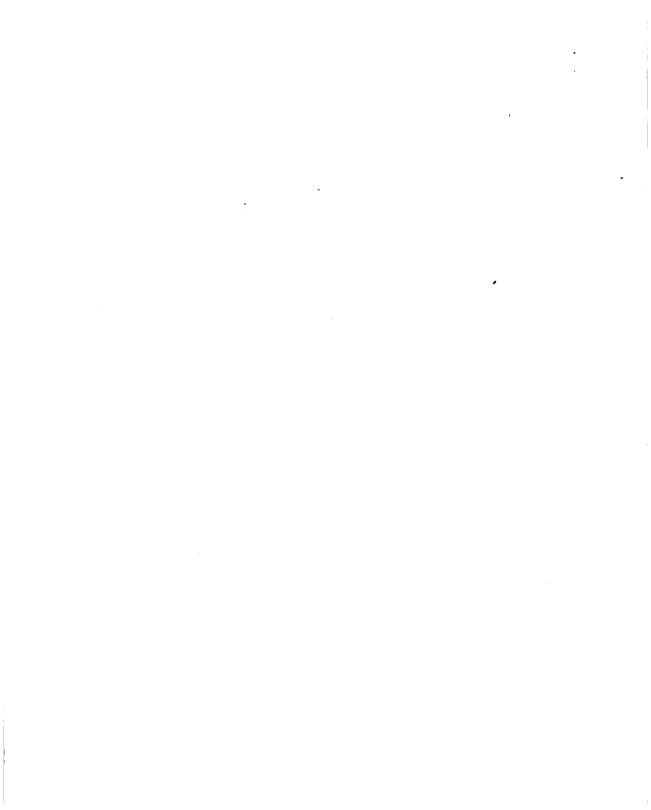
I thank Thee that I chose that Part

Of patient Wooer;

Love launcheth not alway his Dart

A blind Pursuer."]



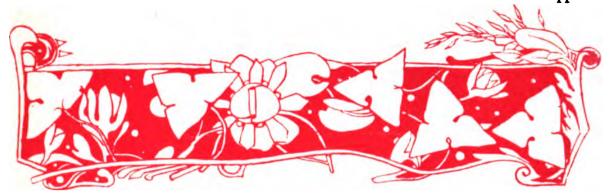




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I.



BY THE RIVER.

REEN sunny June it was; there, on the Bank,
We wandered, You and I. Tall Grasses sank
And kissed Your Feet a Welcome; wavy Docks
Fann'd You Attendance; with his loosen'd Clocks

The Dandelion strewed Your Path with Down
For You to tread; which, clinging, lent Your Gown
Still softer Garniture. On ev'ry side
The many-tinted Company we spied,—

Bulrush, and yellow Flag, and sedgy Reed,
Daisy, and Pimpernel. All the gay Mead
Did You Obeisance. Yet You heeded not,
Blue royal Eyes fix'd but on one blue Spot,
Your pale blue Sisterhood,—Forget-me-not.
Forget me not?; Nay, I forget Thee not.

You stoop'd and gather'd; You were one of them;
Fair Flow'rs to bloom again on fairer Stem!
You placed them in Your Bosom. Grafted there,
I saw both fairer that before were fair;
I saw their Blue and Gold more gold and blue;
Your blue Eyes bluer, and, methinks, more true;
Their hearts more golden; better Yours than Gold,
Beating so near them that they knew, untold,
How, dying, they with us might ever live.
Could I but pray You give me?; You but give?.
I pass again that little flow'ry Plot;
There blooms again my sweet Forget-me-not.
Is June still balmy June?—For me, I wot,

June flow'reth on; for I—forget Thee not!.



II.

"NINA."

EE soft Hand of a little Maid
Touch'd my own, and I understood,—
"Nina wishes you kind and good";
Press'd upon me in fervent Wise
Little Lessons of Charity.

Great sad Eyes of a little Maid Rèad my own, and I rèad therein,— "Look at Nina, and keep from Sin"; Preach'd me under the solemn Lash Little Sermons of Piety. Sweet low Notes of a little Maid Whisper'd into my trembling Heart,— "Nina sings you the better Part"; Thrilling wakened in Echo there Little Murmurs of Love and Hope.

Rose-bud Lips of a little Maid
Open'd into a Rose to say,—
"Be like Nina, and you'll be gay."
Lips of Wisdom!—I wished they were
Little Volumes that I might read!—

Knitted Brows of a little Maid
Frown'd upon me at once for this;
"Nina's Lips are not yours to kiss";
Threaten'd also for evermore
Little Terrors of Punishment.





III.

ΝΗ'ΛΕΕΣ 'ΗΜΑΡ.

OFT as the spreading Smile of infant Slumber,
Grew from my Heart the Love and Hope of Her
Gently into my Life; I lived for Her.
Now have the Days no Light, the Hours no Number.

Her Eyes, like Summer-Night so still and tender,
Sank in my Heart; the sweet full Shape of Her
Formed all that was my Life; I saw but Her.
Now have the Hills no Blue, the Clouds no Splendour.

Like Depth in Darkness, so Her Voice's Singing

Dwelt in my Heart; the Voice and Song of Her

Echoed within my Life; I heard but Her.

Now have the Birds no Song, the Bells no Ringing.

My Love, my Heart, they were not worth Her keeping;
My Love, my Heart, my Life I offered Her.
Why should She keep my Life?—I have not Her.
Now have I naught but Death, no Joy but Weeping.





1V.

A DREAM ON LAGO MAGGIORE.

WAS Evening; and the Lake, that knows me well
Befriended me with Solace of a Calm,
Hushing her Wavelets, that the silent Course
Of Sorrow-laden Fancy might be free.
I ceased to ply my Rowing; let the Bark,
Still won by steady Impulse of the Oar,

D

Drift thither where she would; sat motionless, Waiting until the Scene unlocked my Heart.

The Flush was fading from the Mystery
Of snow-veiled Distance and long summer Hills,
Fading, and fading yet. The Pulse o' the Air
Throbb'd with a moving Fragrancy,—the Balm
Of the sweet Groves of terrac'd Oranges.
The Peace was perfect.

But I lingered on
Till trembled into Light the few faint Stars
Out of the Azure. Then—I saw my Love!—
Her dear lithe Form lay folded in the Stern,
Half-sitting, half-reclining; Her sweet Head
Sunk on one Hand that nestled by Her Breast.
I saw Her there; Her Eyes I may not read
Looked by me after the departing Glow
T'ward Hesperus. I saw Her there, I know;
Noted the Falling of Her soft white Robe,
Its Border, thus and thus; even the Gleam

Of Her familiar Ring.—And then I saw
A Form half hid behind Her; it was I!—
The Face, the Form were mine. There, in the Stern,
I saw Her Form and mine; yet was I here,
Fix'd on the strait low Thwart, and gazed at them,—
Poising the Oar-blade, that it ruffled not
The still, sad Lake. But oh! there was a Change
So great, I doubted yet; a Look of Joy
After unspoken Pain unspeakable,
Which made me wonder. So looked never I.
That Form seem'd nobler,—of a different Time,—
Not what I am, but as I would have been.
Whether 'twas I, I know not; know not yet.

Slowly the Figure mov'd; his murmuring Lips Press'd most caressingly Her Cloud of Hair, Wand'ring among the fair Cloud-wreaths I knew. I saw their close-enlaced Fingers throb With a remembered Pressure of my own.—Anon She turn'd Her Head; and, with a Sigh, A little Sigh, half weary, half of Love

That felt the Night too little for its Love,
She fixed Her Eyes on me, and moved Her Lips;
Yet was it not to me She spoke, but him.
"Why does he tarry, and why waits he here?;
Let him row further, resting afterward,"
She said.

The mellow Murmur of Her Words
Swelled sudden, till its noisy Vehemence
Crashed like the heavy Impact on mine Ear
Of a Wall's Wreckage. All the swift hot Blood
Left me to tremble, cold; then, rushing back,
Smote me within my Heart, a windy Fire,
A burning Storm of many Winds and Airs.

I bow'd my Head, submissive; drew the Oar Through the o'er-slipping Water-way and through, Barring my close-strained Eyes from him and Her; And at their bidding with slow gentle Strokes Floated them thither and yet thitherward.

I saw them not, yet did I know each Look, Each melting of the Eye that gauged in Eye The Measure of their Fondness; heard them not, Yet knew the Moment when their meeting Lips Closed over Sighs that died of Tenderness And Word-caresses; knew their bated Breath, The ceasing of the Heart from fond Oppression Of Heart by Heart; anon the quick'ning Beat Of warm Reaction,—the returning Smile Of Souls that thank'd their earthly Union.

All this I suffered; might not check, not once,
The spell-bound rhythmic Cadence of the Oar;
Nor hasten to Conclusion, lest I mar
The Burden of their Love-song. Thus I row'd,
Ever with bended Head, silent and blind,
At last unknowing.

—— Suddenly the Keel Grated on Sand.

—— There was the summer Night!.

—Whether 'twas I, I know not; know not yet. I wait, I tarry;—resting afterward.





v.

LA CHETA.



ILENT, long-thinking, She,
And something sad;
Yet he who shared, maybe,
Her Thoughts, were glad.

Eyes, in whose dreamy Light
Young Fancies beam;
But oh, how infinite
Could be their Dream!

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Pure Eyes, that yet can glow, And yearn—and yearn; Sad Eyes, that yet shall know Their Power to burn.

Sweet Lips, that ne'er let forth An angry Breath; Yet were their trembling worth Or Life or Death.

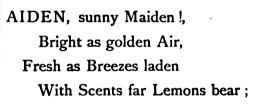
Calm and serene the Brow;
Yet not so cold
But it will flush enow
The Day Her Love is told.





VI.

LA GIOIOSA.



Maid of the sun-beam Tresses,
Maid of the sun-lit Eye;
Maid, whom the Day-dawn blesses
With Beauty ne'er to die;

E

Maiden! when Thou smilest
Life is Life again;
Back to our Hearts beguilest
All that the World has ta'en.

Comest, as with Swallow

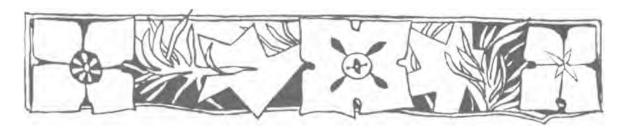
Comes the quick'ning Spring;

Goest, that we may follow

Thy new Awakening.

Maiden! Thine be Pleasure;
Maiden! Love be Thine;
Thine, that in fullest Measure
Pleasure and Love combine!

Maiden! e'en as the Laughter
Of Thy girlish Glee
May Thy Life hereafter
Be from Sorrow free!



VII.

TIME AND CARE.

S it three or is it four, Since we kissed,—and kissed no more;

You were all,-and all was o'er?;

This Year is like the Year before.

-"A Man in his Prime and a Mountain to climb;

Not a Ghost of a Doubt he'll get over the Bout.

Time kills Care."—But Care kills Time.

Is it four or is it five?;
Is Care dead and Time alive?;
What if Care should still thrive,
Years and tears for ever strive?.
Sorrow will wear till the Soul is bare;
The stouter the Stuff, the more it will rough.
Care and Time kill Time and Care.

What has Care to do with Days?;
Time goes, and Care stays;
Time speeds, and Care delays;
Care is a Fact, and Time a Phase.
Care kills the Care that silver'd the Hair,
And Time that devours is slain by its Hours.
Time kills Time, and Care kills Care.

Time was when Care was not;
Killing Time was a careless Lot;
Trouble then was but a Spot,
Hardly seen and soon forgot

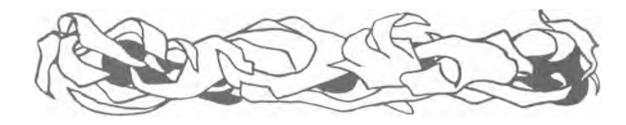
In the blinding Glare of the Joy that was there. The brighter the Light, the darker the Night, The dead Time and the dead Care.

That old Time is alway new;
'Tis all the Time I have; and You
Are all the Care I ever knew;
But when You died, my Heart died too.
Poor Changes that chime, poor Riddles that rhyme!;
Is Sorrow so fond that it sees not, beyond,
The end of Care and the End of Time?





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VIII.

TWA BRITHERS.

HERE were twa Brithers livèd aince,
Twa Birdies o' a Feather;
Ye ne'er could see them baith alane,
They flock'd aboot thegither.

When they were wee bit Bairns at Hame They spairted i' the Heather; And when ae Laddie slippit doon, They greeted baith thegither. Ae Plaid they had to bield the twa Fra' cauld and windy Weather; At ilk o'er bitter biting Blast They chittered baith thegither.

And when they saw the Warl' at large, And left their Mither's Tether, They lo'ed the sel'-same bonnie Lass And woo'd her baith thegither.

I' sooth they were a bonnie Pair,
And tight and teugh as Leather;
When ane had suppit ower lang,
They baith were fou thegither.

They ne'er wad threap amang theirsels
Wi' "gin" and "but" and "whether";
When ane said "Na!", they baith said "Na!",
And shuik their Pows thegither.

When Jock was ill, poor Tam was waur Fra' tenting o' his Brither;
When neither couldna haud up mair
They kept their Beds thegither.

And then there cam' an awfu' Time;
They baith were in a Swither,—
Aiblins they maun be on'y ane,
Nae mair be twa thegither.

But their Alarm was needless a';

Death might have well ta'en either,
But ne'er had met wi' sic a Pair,
So He tuik them baith thegither.

And noo they're in anither Warl',—
The upper or the nether—;
I'm thinkin' there's nae doot at a'
They'll just be baith thegither.

'Tis like they're in the Warl' aboon
For lo'ing ane anither;
They wadna lo'e a bit the waur
For being there thegither.

Wi' a' their Fauts, they couldna weel
Be wonning in the ither;
The Fient a Hell 'twad be to them,
Gin they were there thegither!.





IX.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE LAKE OF BOURGET BY A SENSITIVE MAN.



MUSE of Poetry, who didst erewhile
Inspire the gentle Soul of Lamartine,
Please tell me what to say, and how to say it;
I'm going to try and sing the Lake at Aix.

We went there in a two-horsed Omnibus, With Ladies, Hampers, and some other Friends. We drove some twenty Minutes out of Aix
Through a straight Avenue of shady Trees;
And one there was who would beguile the Way
By playing Tunes to luckless Passers-by,
To reassure them that he meant less Harm
Than e'en his Air suggested—or he thought
To teach them what he knew of Music; but
He conceived Music as a blatant Noise.
I can't say how it is; but I have known
Some folks play comic Tunes where Angels sigh.

A Steamer hailed our coming at the Pier,—
A mimic Pier that guards a mimic Port;
Nor was the Vessel larger than such Craft
As might befit for Yachting Purposes
Modern Titania, with a tiny Crew
Of elfish Stokers nursing Pixie-fires,—
Puck at the Helm and Ariel the Prow,—
Hobgoblin Stewards, and just Room to spare
For dullard Bottom as the precious Freight!.

Embark'd and cast aloot,—whither away?. To Hautecombe's Abbey, where the princely Race Lies dead and buried that did rule Savoy?. Fair are her Towers: fairer still the Scene The guardian Monks may view in mute Repose When the Day's Work is done—all else being gone E'en of that little outer World they know. Theirs then the Solace of sweet Intercourse With sadden'd Eve enshrouding dying Day, Whom ministering Shadows deck the while With regal Purple for the Power that was. Nor hopeless sinks he: but in Death most fair With rosy Smiles prophetic of the Dawn-Theirs too the silent Watching of the Stars, And theirs the Dream of Life: those mighty Orbs Beyond all Reach, all Ken, so vast, so far, Look! they lie trembling at their Feet below. Tho' all's abandon'd,—Love, Life's Joys,—may yet Ambition burn within her secret Flame; Nay, from these very Walls have risen Men Who dar'd to win the papal Crown and——

—— —— Hark!

What Shriek discordant rends the placid Air?; What mocking Fiend with hellish Laughter loud Yells at Ambition?—Stranger, be assur'd: 'Tis but the funny Man again—he's there; He wants a little Music—It's his Way—When I say "Music," I mean blatant Noise.

Turn we to Chatillon—Yon rocky Knoll,
Proudly pre-eminent above the Plain,
Where ends the Lake in Marshes, lifts its Head,
Crown'd with time-honoured Battlement—no more
Protection, but itself the Peasant's Care.
Savoy is past; Her Bulwarks mossy Wreck
Which the sad Ivy covers from the Gaze
Of Time that is. But Memory may weave
Fair Garlands of old Fancies in those Walls
When the still Gloaming deepens o'er the Lake,
And whisp'ring Poplars gossip of their Youth;
And the pale Moon, that went her nightly Rounds
When belted Sentinels their Vigils kept

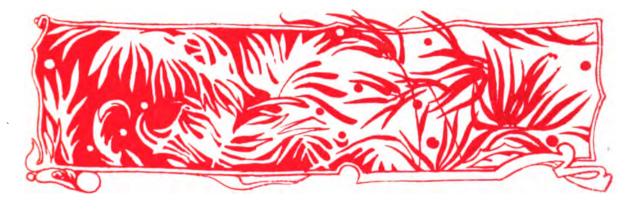
On you grim Tower, still returns to view
With muffled Gaze the desolated Spot,
A Widow mourning for her lost Romance.
And then that Legend—Hush! what plaintive Wail
Breaks forth in dismal Cadence from the Gloom?.
Is it some awful Ghost's appalling Cry
For foul unutterable Deed of Blood
For ever tortur'd?—It's our Friend the Wag!;
He's fond of Music—very fond he is!.
By "Music" understand a blatant Noise!.

Away! Away!—Seek we the further Shore
Where first the Lake receives her tribute Streams,
A Queen her Vassal-court—There Bourget's Keep,
Cradle of Princes, guards the Southern Heights
Facing the mighty Alps; whose snowy Crests
Tow'r above all Things else predominant
Ever immobile; looking there below
On the broad Plains of sun-fed Italy,
And here on fertile France—At last in Peace

Surely the yearning Soul may Earth forget
In Admiration of those Forms divine,—
Beauty supreme, perfected Majesty,—
Whose lovely Greatness baffles all the Art
Of human Excellence to praise or limn.
Here may the Senses drink long Draughts, subdued
To silent Exstacy—Ah, hateful Strains!;
He's playing something out of Offenbach!!.

May may not live alone; the Doom of all Has to be borne with all—So, Friend, proceed; Forgive me that I cannot bray with you!.





X.

AT SAN FRANCESCO "IN DESERTO," VENICE.

NE fairest golden Morning,

Calm as it calm could be,

When the Sea was bathed in Sunshine,

And the Sun bathed in the Sea;

We glided from the City

Forth o'er the broad Lagoon,

Mocking with merry Laughter

The young belated Moon.

We had never a Care or Sorrow,
And never a Thought but this,—
That to live was very pleasant,
And the present living, Bliss.

The Sea-gulls came in Wonder,
Envied, and sped away;
Not theirs such a Wealth of Freedom,
Not theirs such a glad long Day.

We rowed to a purple Island
Away in the distant Haze,
And the Purple turned to Golden
To our still delighted Gaze.

We sang of its Charms together,
With Songs of another Clime,
Guessing the while its Story
In the Days of the olden Time.

We reached that fairy Island;
Sprang blithely on the Shore;
And, strolling through the Greenwood,
We op'd the Convent Door.

I know not why I lingered;
Some Fancy made me sigh;
And right on the very Threshold
A Legend caught my Eye.

"O BEATA SOLITUDO!"—
And underneath was writ,—
"O SOLA BEATITUDO!"—
I paused and pondered it.

Must Life, to be worth the living, Be lived away from Man?; Is No one his best Comrade, Nothing the best he can?. Are Friends of Naught in Pleasure?;
Of Naught when the Heart is sad?;
And a Thought came for the Morrow;
Shall I be alone and glad?.

Can Man do Nothing for Manhood?;

Is the Bee not worth the Drone?;

And a Thought of the Past came o'er me;

Had I lived better alone?.

I found that my Friends had left me;Smiled at my lonely Plight;"A Fig for the Joys of Exile!";And I laughed with all my Might.

We roam'd and sang together

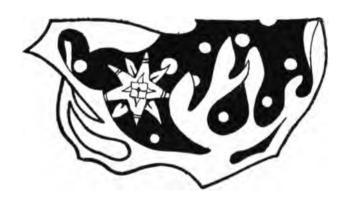
All through that bright long Day;

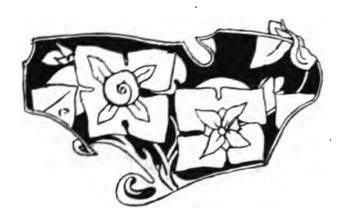
And the very Cypress gladden'd

In the splendid evening Ray.

We prais'd that lonely Island;
We all were loth to go;
For the Glow in our Hearts responded
To the wond'rous golden Glow.

But often by night, in Venice,
When Rest I might not find,
The Words on that grey old Threshold
Have saddened again my Mind.

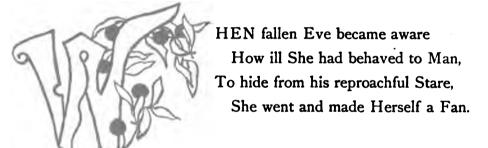






XI.

LINES WRITTEN ON A LADY'S FAN.



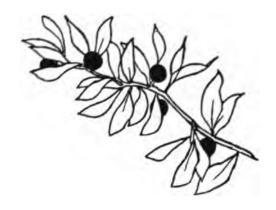
But when She peeped above the Rim In wistful, deprecating, Wise, The Action rather tickled him; He didn't know She had such Eyes. So when he asked Her to explain

The Reason of that new Conceit,

Away went Shame; She peep'd again,

And said "to screen Her from the Heat."

The day was Hers. Full many too
Have conquered thus in many Lands;
Eve told Her Daughters what to do
In Future with Their idle Hands.





XII.

ΎΠΝΟΣ ΊΑΥΠΝΟΣ.

WAKE, and not yet four!; methought I slept.

How hard and hot this Pillow!—What dull Void

Broods all around me, and doth blur the Lines

Of broad-day Reason, and confound each Sense

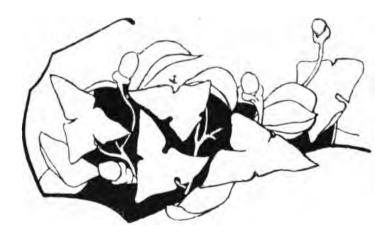
Baffling the Vision of both Eye and Mind!

E'en as a Cloak thrown o'er a still prone Corse, So clings the Night.

Two weary Hours till Day, And by my Side, mocking Eternity,

This little clever Toy of Springs and Wheels
Will tick and tick each Second of each Hour;
Toy made by Man to keep Account of all
The little measured Moments of his Span
Down to his last one; which is come and gone
Even like one of these. The mimic Pulse
Clamours impatient to th' unwinding Spring
To make an End and cease. Poor weary Toy!,
Thy tiny Life is one recurring Strain,
Like Man's who made thee; and hard Work thou hast
To pace with Time.

See! the grey Dawn is here!—





XIII.



"ADINE."

EA-WINDS do buffet me
So salt and keen;
One Name, one Face I see,—
"Adine," "Adine."
The dull Sky deadens me.—
It might have been!
O is it not to be,
Adine, Adine?.

The provest Called again.

Whe solded Them

Why solded The called Streethern

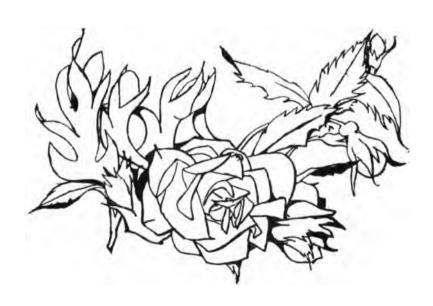
Alled Sky less than his variables.

Sold Sky less than his variables.

Calle You had known to a call.

Alled Alled.

Still homs with higher older This and colling Scene: Ah! but You can't say "No,"
Adine, Adine!.
Sinks the warm Sun below
Soft and serene;
Now You are mine, I know,
Adine, Adine!.



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XIV.

A LOVE-PASSAGE ON THE LAKE OF HALLSTADT.



IS the merry Fisher's-daughter,

Happy-hearted, lithe of Limb
Free of Land and free of Water,

Wanton as a Woman's Whim;

Cunning in the Fisher's Calling;

Nimble both to net and spin;

Arm and Ankle bared for hauling

All the dripping Drag-net in.

'Tis the Fisher's Mate-assistant,

"Sep" the handsome, "Sep" the brave;

Village Beauties near and distant

Over "Sep" the Gallant rave.

One of very simple Notions,—

Kiss, in Love!; in Anger, strike!;

Knowing only warm Emotions,

Love and Hate, not cold Dislike.

Side by Side
Thus the fitting Pair that glide
O'er the Water's limpid Blue;
With the hempen Toil they guide
Resting on each twin Canoe;
To the Margin of the Shadow
Which the western Mountains fling,
Where the Fishes love to tarry,
Leap and spring,
At their merry Banqueting.

Ever grows the sombre Shadow,
Stealing slowly, slily, on;
Plays the Game "Appropriation,"—
One Side taking what it chooses,
While the other only loses,—
Till the Light of Day is gone;
Spreads the Gloom of "Annexation,"
Where the Sun-light freely shone.

Still are then the Waves of Feeling;
Darkness broods upon the Lake;
Till th' ensanguin'd Dawn of Freedom
O'er the troubl'd Sleepers break!

There it is they set the Circle
Of the deadly floating Ring,
Hemming in the living Victims
With an endless Shroud of String.

Joyous Cries
Greet anon each greater Prize,
Greet the Small-fry in Derision;
While their Shouts of Laughter rise,
Death obscures the fishy Vision.

Busily they ply the Drag-net, Setting, drawing, with a Will; But within them is a Magnet Draws the Drawers better still.

- —" Were this Troutlet only Thou,
 And Thou wert within my Arms,
 Thou should'st ope Thy Gills, I trow;
 How I'd kiss Their rosy Charms!"—
- —" Flat-fish!" cried she in a Pet,
 "Come not flapping in my Way!

 I would spoil Thy Beauty yet,
 E'er Thou stol'st one Kiss away."—

- —" Leave Thy railing, if Thou knowest
 What a taunted Man can do;
 For the Anger that Thou showest
 I could show Thee Anger too!"—
- —" Fie upon Thee, silly Callant!;
 Must Thy Answer be so rough?;
 It is good for ev'ry Gallant
 Now and then to know Rebuff!"—
- -"' Now and then'?; Thy Wit is ever Sharper than the sharpest Thorn; I am dull, and Thou art clever, But I cannot bear Thy Scorn.
- "See! Thou knowest that I love Thee;
 See! my Heart is brave and true;
 By the deep blue Sky above Thee,
 Tell me that Thou lov'st me too!—

- "Fair I know that all have thought Thee,
 And that Thou canst choose at Will;
 That in vain Long Andrew sought Thee,
 And rich Peter of the Mill;
- "But the Love, with which I woo Thee,
 Is a Love that all can dare;
 And the Hand, with which I sue Thee,
 Is as strong as Thou art fair.
- "Ever with the first I've striven,
 Yield to none on Crag or Wave;
 Friend or Foe, have ever given
 Better Measure than he gave.
- "See! Thou knowest how I love Thee!;
 See! my Love is brave and true;
 By the deep blue Sky above Thee,
 Tell me that Thou lov'st me too!"—

—Smilingly the Fisher's Daughter Turn'd away when he had done; Smiling gazed upon the Water, Half in Pity, half in Fun;

Asked him, after musing duly,
With a merry, furtive Glance,—
"Love me?, dost Thou love me truly?;
I will give Thy Love a Chance.

"If the Cast we now shall venture

Bring up aught as big as Thee,

Then be hopeful; peradventure

Thou shalt be the Man for me!"—

"Sep" the rude
In a sullen angry Mood,
Cursing that he sued in vain,
That she mock'd him when he woo'd,
Flung the Net in, as he went,
With a Splash of Discontent,
Row'd, and turn'd, and came again;

Then bent over, grimly peering
In the deep blue Depths below,
Whether any monster Fishes
Might be in the Net or no.

But the merry Fisher's-daughter,—
With a Humour all her own,—
Tipp'd him over in the Water,
And he vanish'd like a Stone!;

Reappeared a Moment after,

Clinging struggling to the Net;

Heard a Voice, with mocking Laughter,

Ask him if he were not wet?—

—" Come and love me, now or never!;
Nay; I'll help Thee o'er the Side;
If Thou art as big as ever,
Be not angry with Thy Bride!

"Thou art mine,—for I have caught Thee;
But I give myself to Thee;
For the Ill that I have wrought Thee
Take Thy Vengeance now on me!"—







XV.

FRIED OYSTERS.

ASTERS!, You ought to know this fine old Quip!.

Ha, ha!, I've laughed thereat many a Time,
Laughed loud and long, many's the Time and oft,
With some of our good Queen Elizabeth
Her merry merry Men i' the Whitehall;
And sniggered at it sly when I was young,
And "bloody Mary" said she'd "have no Jokes"!.

But we did get a Tale in now and then,
Or Song, maybe, soft up the Chimney, like,
By some Yule-log, with just a tickling Catch
The Queen had come by Profit an she heard!—
Or else we'd sharpen our dull Wits a bit
By telling how the new Words come;—(you've heard?)
"Eaves-droppers," "Chaps," "Black-guards," and such-like stuff!

A true Tale, this one, Masters; worth rememb'ring.

I had it first just so, by a Yule-log.

We were all serious, then, some ten of us,—

Had had a bit of Service in a Church

With a stray Parson, just for Christmas-tide,—

And then sat solemn round the good red Yule,

Musing a while over a Cup of Ale.

And some had talked of Angels,—what they were,

And how they did their Mission upon Earth;

So to the good broad Pieces of that Name

We gossipped on; and so the Talk came round

To the "Good King"'s own "Angels." Some had nigh

Forgotten clean their very Name and Style, And what they did for England in their Time, With Those that went before them in the Land. -Well, of a sudden, in the Ingle-nook, One who had lately come among us there,— A shrewd good honest Yeoman,—twitches up His rosy Face into a great broad Smile; (I could just see him caught by the Fire's Glow;) And says quite quietly, with a slow Turn Of Voice and Manner, "If it pleases you, My Masters, I could tell you something there." We prayed him do so. How he made us roar Before he'd done with 't!; for he sat so quiet, While I,—nay, but you should have heard the Man Tell it himself!,—I always laugh too much Right in the telling.——'Twas an Inn in Kent On the King's Highway; and for noonday Halt There'd come a certain Company of Folk Such as the King could bear the least of all; Fellows in black,—some with a Belt and Sword, Not Soldiers and not Trav'lers,—with black Cloaks,

Pale Faces, foreign Ways; the Spanish Breed Of bastard English Outlaws was scarce known, Nor all that bloody base Conspiracy; Though there were Hints of Danger from within As well as from without.—Well, this queer Folk Had ordered,—'twas their Fast-day, so they said,— A goodly Dish of Oysters fried in Bacon, Whitstable Oysters, fat and juicy, sweet With crumpled Parsley on the top of them; A Dish to make one thankful. So my Men, The Jesuit Spawn, had gotten to their Seats, And the young Drawer waited for their "Grace," To raise the steaming Covers; when a Lad, His Fellow from the Stable, rushes in. "Masters!, my Masters!, pray you haste; here be A goodly Company, a brave good Show!; 'Tis the King's Angels; pray you come and see; All upon Horse-back, twenty,—ay, and more."— -"Angels on Horse-back?", quoth the Leader there, Rising death-pale from's Chair; "What do you mean?"; And his teeth chattered. But the rest said naught,

Sitting as if dumb-foundered.—Comes anon
The curious Drawer from a hasty Glimpse
Out o' the open Door; beholds the Room
Empty, and all the Men clean gone, Swords, Gowns,
And Spanish Hats, all gone,—clean gone away!

Whither ?—I may not tell.—But how ?—I must Not tell you, Masters; nay, I may not tell!—

But in comes all the gallant Company
Of the King's Angels; and they sit them down,
Sniffing the dainty Fare on the vacant Table.
"What!, have the Varlets fled?; marry!", quoth one,
"Twas presto pass and fly!",—when he had heard
The troubled Landlord's Tale about his Guests.
But ere those Oysters had had time to cool,
My Masters ate the dainty Dishes up,
Right glad to find a Meal already there,
Roaring with Laughter at—I know not what!—

Nay; what their Joke was?—Nay, I may not tell!—But up in London Town, I've heard it said,
My sly young Gentles always order now
"Angels on Horseback," when a foreign Spy
Rubs you his greasy Doublet 'gainst the Wall
O' the same Eating-House; or a Mary's-man
Swaggers too loudly. So the Story runs
On from King Edward's Time; for th' Humour of it.

And now you know as well as I how 'twas Your Dish of Oysters got so christened.

- -But those black Gentry, what became of them ?-
- -Now Heav'n forgive me!, but I may not tell!-

Good Masters, rest you merry!—"Good Queen Bess!, And England for the Englishmen!" say I.



XVI.

A WOMAN'S GLOVE.

LONE by the early morning Light,

A Man is kissing with fond Delight

A Glove that was given him Yesternight;

Alone and glad.

Alone in the waning ev'ning Glow
A Man is gazing, with Head bent low,
On a twisted Glove of a Month ago;
Alone and sad.

A Man strides fast through the driving Rain,
And he clutches a Glove with a crimson Stain;
Alone, and bearing the Brand of Cain;
Alone and bad.

A Moon-beam falls in the Cell from above
On a Creature cowering over a Glove;
Alone, and raving of plighted Love;
Alone and mad!





XVII.

DÎS ALITER VISUM.

IVE me a Gallant from London Town,

Heigh-ho!" sighed the Lassie;

"Give me a Gallant from London Town,

A Pearl in my Ear, and a brave silk Gown,

And I'll ne'er show you a Tear or a Frown

This Side of Heaven oh!"—

But her own young Heart she gave, instead,

L

To the poorest Yeoman who toil'd for 's Bread, And she wasted away until they were wed, But now she's the Mother of seven oh!

"Give me a Flagon of good red Wine,

'Odsblood!" swore the Soldier;

"Give me a Flagon of good red Wine,

And the Parson may follow the Herd of Swine!;

Give me a Tavern wherein to dine,

A Pipe, and a rare good Story oh!"—
But a Cup of cold Water he gave, instead,
To a dying Comrade among the dead,
And the very next Minute he got his own Lead,
And now he's happy in Glory oh!.

"Give me a good long Life for to work,

Mark my Words!" quoth the Goodman;

"Give me a good long Life for to work,

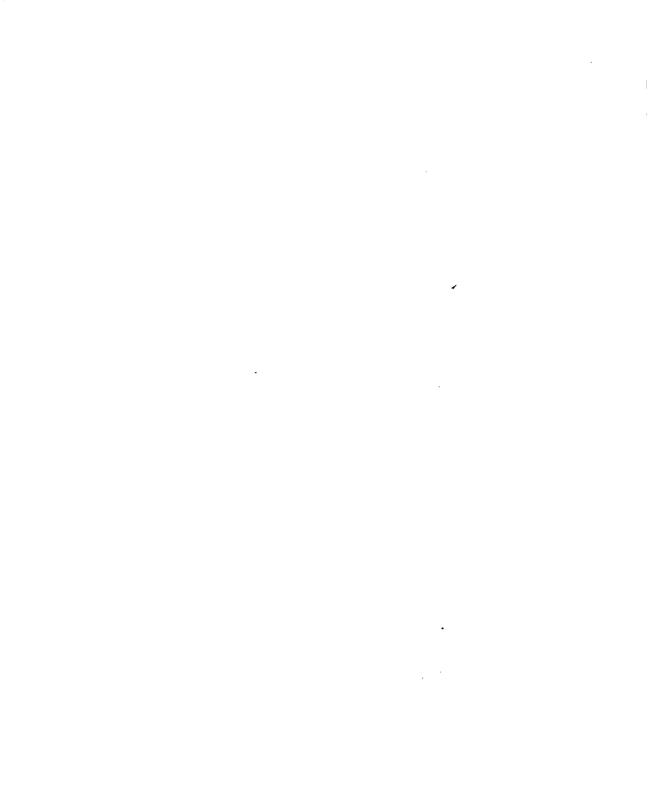
A busy long Life, and I won't shirk,

For I don't see where Trouble can lurk

With a Wife that's rich and thrifty oh!"—

But his own Peace of Mind he gave, instead,
To the veriest Shrew that e'er quarrelled in Bed,
And as for this work-a-day World, 'tis said,
That now he would leave it at fifty oh!







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